

Message Text

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ACTION VOE-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 /005 W

-----060943Z 080627 /17

R 060715Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8559

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

USLO RIYADH

UNCLAS JIDDA 4024

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, CGEN, SA

SUBJ: ENDING WIDESPREAD USE OF B-2 PROSPECTIVE STUDENT VISAS

REF: (A) 76 STATE 260375, (B) 76 JIDDA 6738 (NOTAL),

(C) 76 JIDDA 6675

1. EMBASSY JIDDA PROPOSES TO BEGIN PHASING OUT ISSUANCE OF BULK LOTS OF B-2 PROSPECTIVE STUDENT VISAS TO SAUDI GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED STUDENTS AFTER JUNE 30, 1977. AFTER THAT DATE ALL SAUDI STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE AN F-1 VISA. EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE FOR MEMBERS OF SAUDI MILITARY FORCES WITH TRAINING IN U.S. MILITARY FACILITIES OF LESS THAN ONE YEAR.

2. JIDDA HAS COME TO THIS DECISION FOR SEVERAL REASONS. THE MOST IMPORTANT IS THAT THE PRESENT USE OF THREE DIFFERENT VISAS FOR STUDENTS IS UNWORKABLE AND CONFUSING. JIDDA'S CONSULAR OFFICER AND STAFF ARE FACED EVERYDAY WITH STUDENT VISA APPLICATIONS WHICH DO NOT FIT EASILY INTO ANY CATEGORY. SIGNIFICANT UNDERSTAFFING HERE MEANS THAT EITHER PROBLEMS ARE OVERLOOKED OR HASTY DECISIONS ARE MADE.
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MOREOVER, ONCE THE RUSH REASON STARTS IN JUNE, AN EVEN LESS THOROUGH JOB WILL BE DONE, RESULTING IN INCREASING PROBLEMS AT THE PORT OF ENTRY.

3. THE FLIP SIDE OF THE EMBASSY'S CONFUSION IS THAT THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT AND STUDENTS ARE EQUALLY CONFUSED. SOMETIMES THIRTY MINUTES TO AN HOUR ARE SPENT EXPLAINING TO

ONE APPLICANT WHY HE CANNOT RECEIVE A B-2 VISA.
AFTER HE LEAVES, CALLS FROM MODA, MFA, AND
PARENTS TO THE AMBASSADOR, DCM AND OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS
ARE MADE ASKING FOR EXPLANATIONS OF THE VISA DECISION.
THE NUMBER OF SENIOR OFFICER MANHOURS EXPENDED ON SUCH
VISAS DECISIONS IS ABSURD.

4. THIS CONFUSION AMONG THE SAUDIS CAUSES TERRIBLE FRICTION
BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND THE GOVERNMENT, WITH BAD FEELINGS
RESULTING. NO MATTER HOW THE DECISION IS EXPLAINED, THE
AGGRIEVED APPLICANT WHO CANNOT RECEIVE A B-2 VISA FEELS THAT THE
EMBASSY IS PLAYING FAVORITES AND UNDERMINING HIS PRESTIGE.
AND IF THE APPLICANT'S PRESTIGE IS HURT, SO IS THAT
OF THE PATRON WHO CALLS THE EMBASSY TO TRY TO GET THE B-2.

5. PASSING ON ALL THESE CHANGE OF STATUS CASES TO INS
DOES NOTHING TO HELP EASE THE BURDEN ON THE OVERWORKED
AND UNDERSTAFFED ORGANIZATION.
THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO SEND ONLY
PROPERLY DOCUMENTED NON-IMMIGRANTS TO THE U.S. ALTHOUGH THESE
LARGE NUMBERS OF SAUDI STUDENTS FIT THE LETTER OF THE
REGULATIONS, JIDDA DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THEY FIT THE INTENT
OF THE REGULATIONS.

6. FINALLY, OVER A YEAR AGO CONGRESS WAS TOLD THAT SAUDI AND
KUWAITI STUDENTS WOULD IN THE FUTURE BE TREATED JUST AS ALL OTHER
NON-IMMIGRANT STUDENTS ARE. IF THERE WAS ANY BENEFIT TO DELAYING
ANY LONGER THE FULFILLMENT OF THAT STATEMENT BEYOND MAKING THE
SAUDI EDUCATIONAL MISSION'S JOB A LITTLE EASIER, JIDDA WOULD
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GLADLY CONTINUE TO ISSUE B-W STUDENT VISAS. BUT, GIVEN THE
GROWING NUMBER OF MAN-HOURS THE EMBASSY IS SPENDING ON ROUTINE
VISAS, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE GROWING CONFUSION AND ANGER IN
THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT, JIDDA FEELS THAT A SIMPLIFICATION AND
RATIONALIZATION OF THE STUDENT VISA PROCEDURE IS ABSOLUTELY
MANDATORY.

7. IF DEPARTMENT HAS NO OBJECTION, EMBASSY WILL INFORM MFA OF
INTENDED CHANGE. PERHAPS DEPARTMENT CAN INFORM SAUDI EDUCATIONAL
MISSION TO ENSURE THAT WORD REACHES THEM.
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